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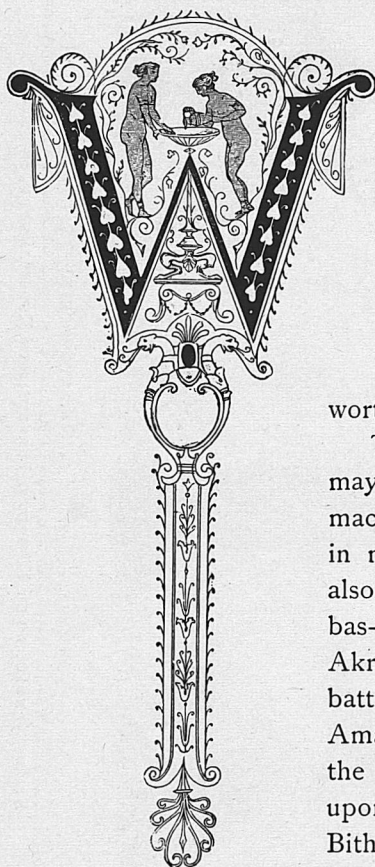
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THE PERGAMON MARBLES.

II.—THE GIGANTOMACHIA AND OTHER SCULPTURES FOUND AT PERGAMON.



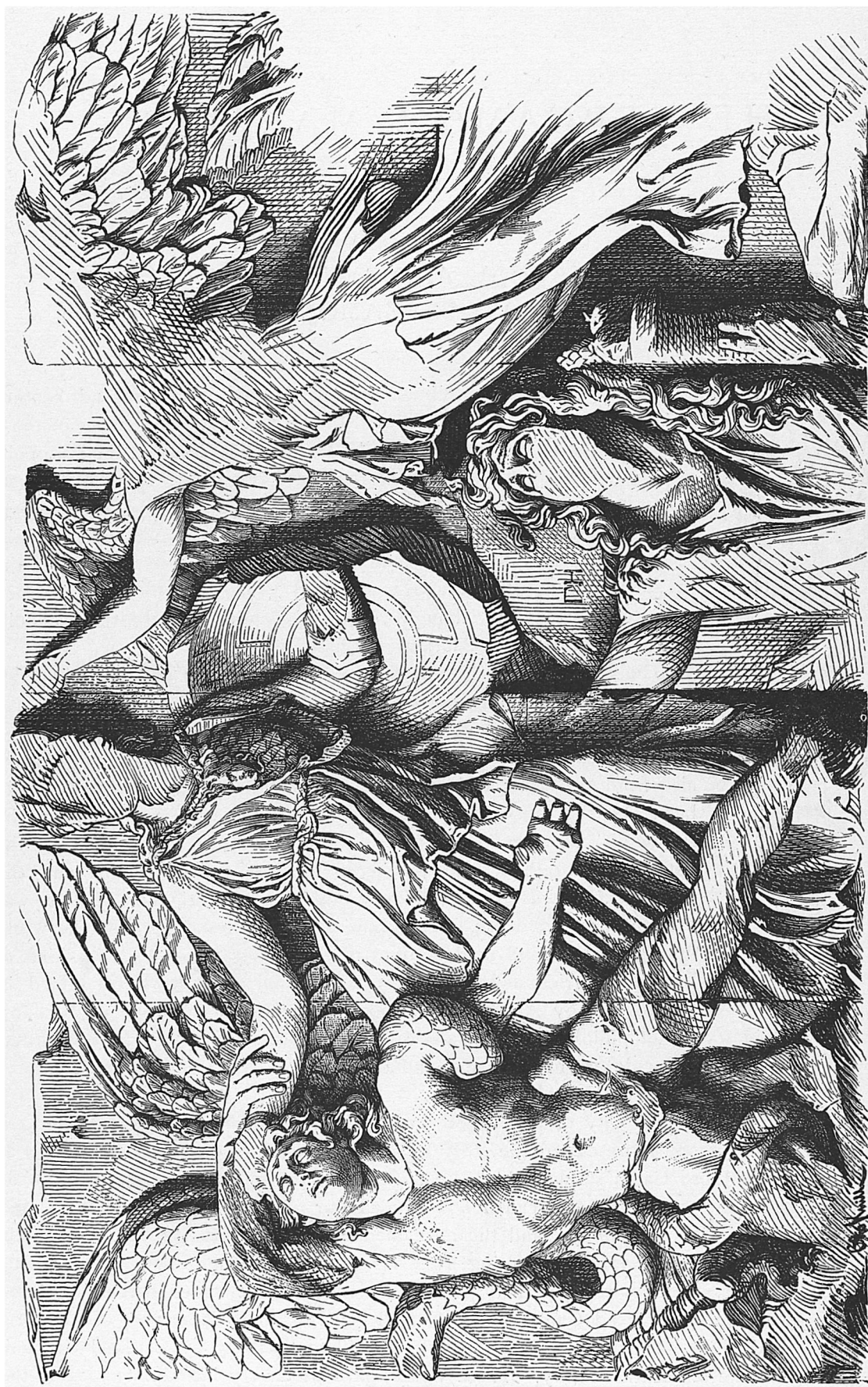
WE knew very little about the plastic art of the second century before the Christian era, until the discovery of the remains of those splendid buildings with which the Attalids crowned the Akropolis of Pergamon, and lacked that firm standpoint which they have given us for the history of sculpture during the intermediate period between the great Greek and the Greco-Roman schools. In them we see what temple sculpture was at its best under the successors of Alexander, and find proof that the school which produced them, though one of the latest born of Greek schools, worthily sustained the glorious traditions of the past.

The four great sculptors of Pergamon, to one or more of whom we may plausibly attribute the Gigantomachia frieze, were Isigonos, Phyromachos, Stratonikos, and Antigonos, who, as Pliny tells us,¹ represented in marble the warlike deeds of Attalos I. and Eumenes II. We learn also from the same ancient writer, that Attalos gave to Athens certain bas-reliefs by these sculptors, which were set up somewhere on the Akropolis, representing the destruction of the Gauls in Mysia, the battle of Marathon, and the fight between the Athenians and the Amazons.² Of Isigonos we know nothing; of Antigonos, that he was the author of a work upon toreutics; of Phyromachos, that he wrote upon sculpture, and made statues of Asklepios (which Prousius, king of Bithynia, carried away from Pergamon) and of Priapos, celebrated in an epigram by Apollonidas; and of Stratonikos, a native of Kyzikos, that he made certain statues of philosophers, and was renowned as a sculptor and bronze caster. Many of the works of these sculptors must have found their way to Rome among the treasures inherited with Pergamon from Attalos III.

It was thus that the Eternal City obtained the doors of the temple of Apollo, which were adorned with reliefs in ivory representing the story of Niobe, and the repulse of the Gauls at Delphi, and probably those Gallic statues which, up to the present time, have represented to us the school of Pergamon; namely, the so-called Dying Gladiator of the Capitoline Museum, first recognized as a Dying Gaul by Nibby; and the misnamed Arria and Pætus group of the Villa Ludovisi, now known to be a Gaul, who, having slain his wife to save her from captivity, puts an end to his own life. Besides these pathetic representations of noble-souled barbarians, there are at Naples two figures of dead Gauls, which formed part of the property of the Farnese Pope Paul III., and three at Venice, which were left by will to that city by Cardinal Grimani, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. These works gave us a very incomplete idea of the

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, XXXIV. 84.

² Pausanias, I. 25. 2.



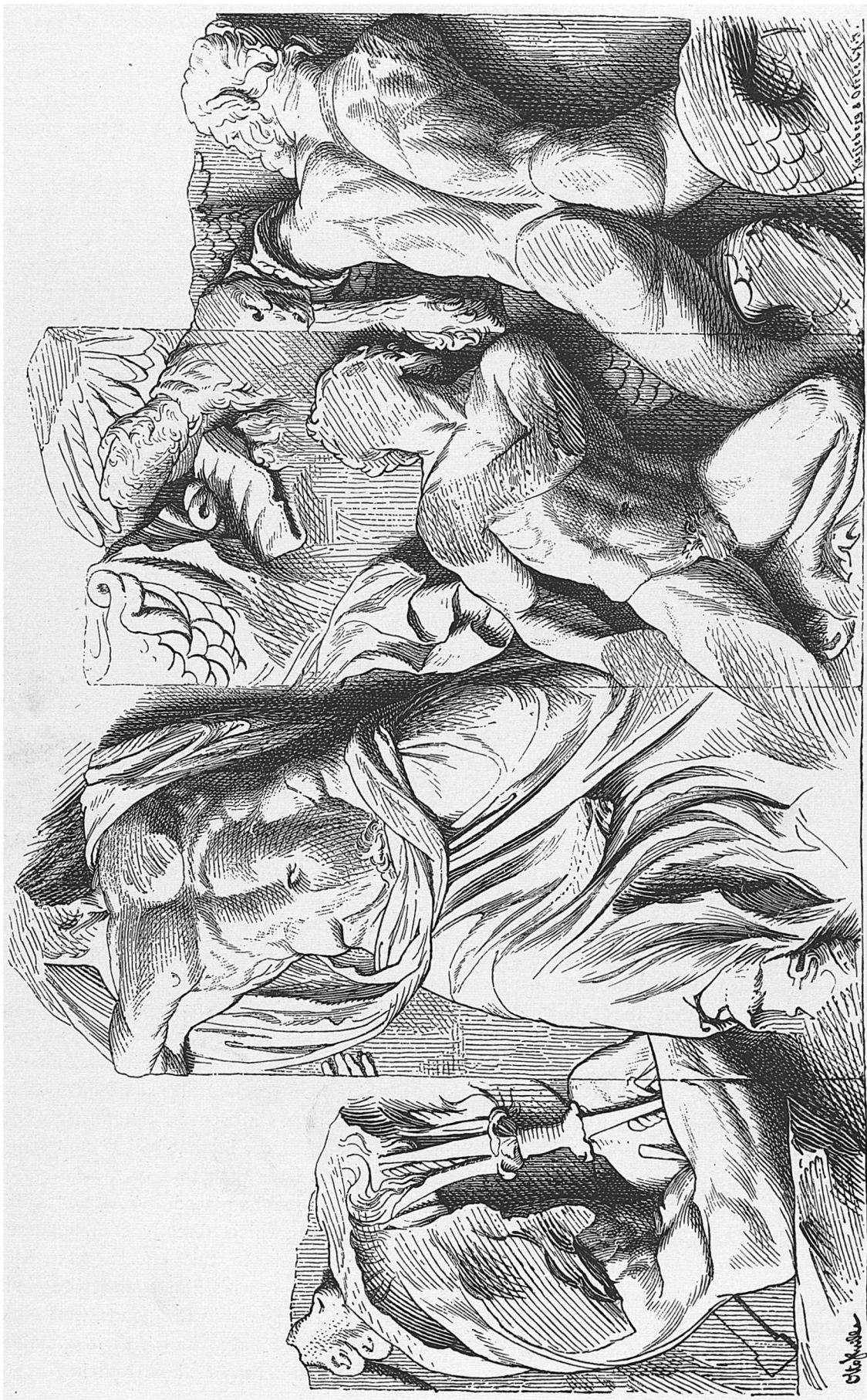
ATHENA. — FROM THE GIGANTOMACHIA.

FROM "JAHRBUCH DER KÖNIGLICH PREUSSISCHEN KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN."



L. Fischer sculp.

J. V. Goyen pinx.



ZEUS. — FROM THE GIGANTOMACHIA.
FROM "JAHRBUCH DER KÖNIGLICH PREUSSISCHEN KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN."

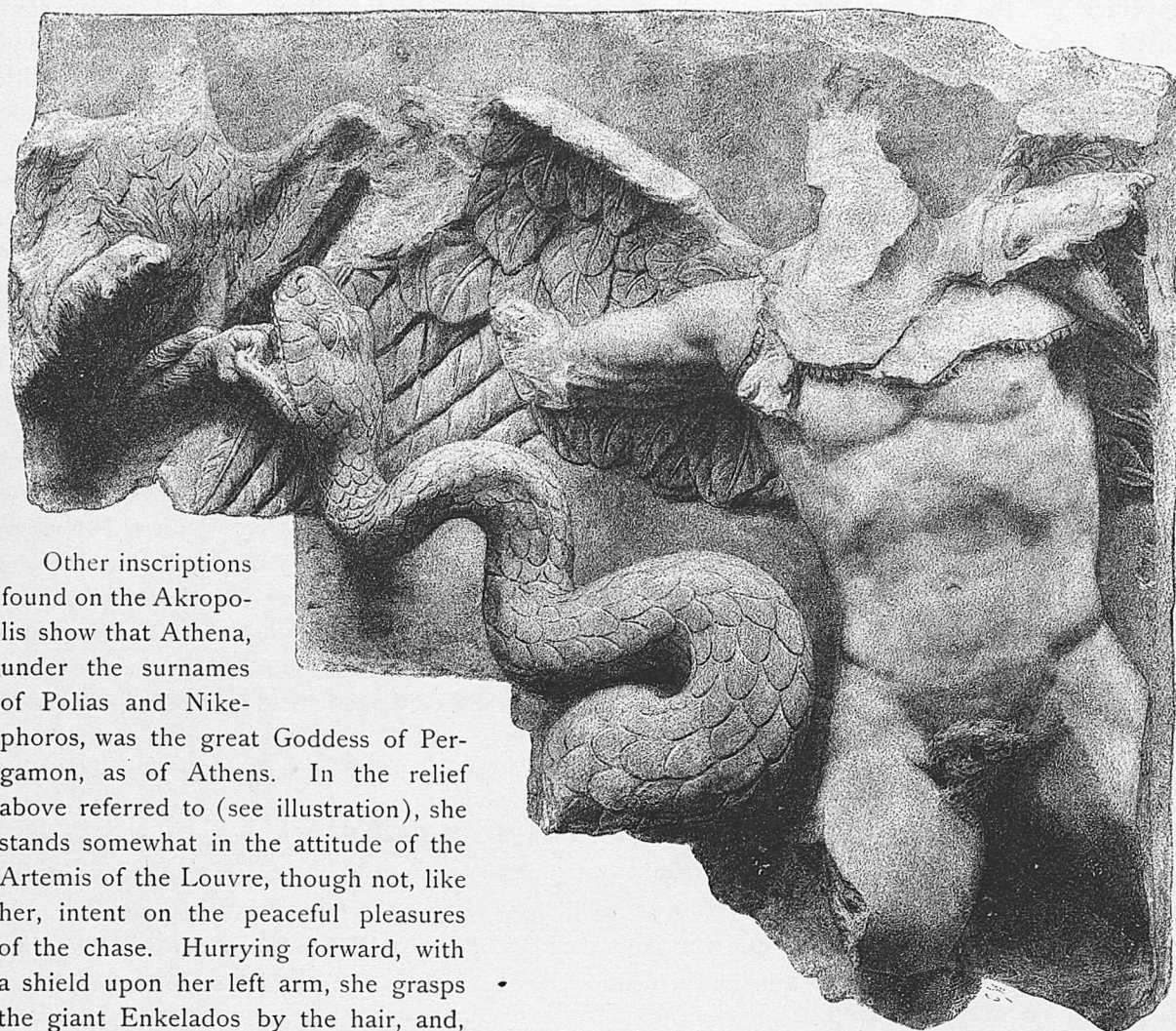
school of Pergamon, compared with that which we have obtained through the late discoveries. We knew it previously as a school which, by individualizing a foreign type never before represented in Greek art, had struck out a new path; for whenever a non-Hellenic race had been represented in sculpture, as, for instance, among the combatants in the pediments of the temple at Ægina,—or in painting, as by Polygnotos in the Lesche of the Knidians at Delphi,—its nationality was marked by costume or by certain symbolic attributes, and not by physical differences or the manifestation of peculiar modes of feeling, as in the Gallic statues of which we are here speaking. It is not only by the torques, the oval shield, the horn, the naked body, and the thick bristling hair, that we recognize the Dying Gaul of the Capitol as such, but by the form of the body, the thick skin of the hands and feet, the heavy eyebrows, and the mournful, uncomplaining submission to a death self-inflicted to escape captivity. Here, as in the other works of its class, above mentioned, unaffected sentiment is naturally expressed in a realistic manner; but, like all late schools, the school of sculpture which produced them was eclectic, and, as the Gigantomachia reliefs now show us, its style ranged from naturalism to idealism. The gratitude of the people thus found double and complete expression, on the one hand through the realistic representation of the appearance and characteristic habits of barbarians who had sought to destroy the last foothold of that Greek civilization which had so long been a light to the nations of the earth, and on the other in a poetic embodiment of that overthrow of brute force by superior intelligence which the valor of Attalos and Eumenes accomplished. This was symbolized in the mythic battle between the Gods and Giants, an oft-repeated subject, though never before more forcibly or more aptly chosen, as its significance tallied with the original meaning of the myth.

The Giants were an earth-born race (*γίγας γηγενής*), mightier in their proportions than men,—of evil and violent disposition,—anthropomorphized natural forces,—embodied earthquakes and volcanoes. Their battles and those of the Titans signify the fruitlessness of material resistance to the power of the Olympian Gods. In theogony¹ the battle of the Giants is less remarkable than that of the Titans, but it is more popular, inasmuch as the Gods and Herakles the demigod took part in it. This popularity showed itself in sculptures, as at Athens and Pergamon; in embroidery, as upon the peplos woven for the archaic image of Athena Polias in the Erechtheion; and in numerous vase paintings, in all of which the Giants were represented, as in the Pergamon frieze, with matted locks, garments made of the skins of wild beasts, and as using rocks, trunks of trees, and clubs, for weapons of attack and defence. Zeus, with thunderbolt and eagle, and Athena, with Gorgon-headed ægis and shield, are always conspicuous among the fighting Gods in such representations, as at Pergamon, where fortunately the two reliefs in which they appear are among the best preserved of the series.

Could we be certain that the following inscription, "Dedicated to Zeus and Athene Nikephoros by King Eumenes, the son of King Attalos," refers to the great altar near whose site it was discovered, there would be no question as to which monarch raised it. That it was Eumenes seems, however, probable, as it was under him that the kingdom reached its acme of power,² and that the city was embellished with many splendid buildings. Moreover, the form of the letters in other inscriptions of the reign of Eumenes, as, for instance, in that which commemorates his expedition against the king of Sparta, 195 B. C., is later than that of the letters in certain inscriptions belonging to the bronze battle groups, probably placed by Attalos within the space sacred to Zeus and Athena. One of these inscriptions, which directly commemorates his Gallic victories, must have belonged to a statue of him. It is to this effect: "To King Attalos. Epigenes, and the leaders and soldiers who fought battles with him against the Gauls and Antiochos, dedicated this in gratitude to Zeus and Athena. [Isi- or Anti-]gonos, works of." Unfortunately, the one which of all the inscriptions we should most have valued, as it contained the name of the sculptor of the frieze, is so mutilated that the letters *ΔΙ* alone remain.

¹ Preller, *Gr. Myth.*, Vol. I. p. 60.

² Strabo, XIII. 623.



Other inscriptions found on the Akropolis show that Athena, under the surnames of Polias and Nikephoros, was the great Goddess of Pergamon, as of Athens. In the relief above referred to (see illustration), she stands somewhat in the attitude of the Artemis of the Louvre, though not, like her, intent on the peaceful pleasures of the chase. Hurrying forward, with a shield upon her left arm, she grasps the giant Enkelados by the hair, and, while a winged Nike crowns her, turns her head back towards her victim, who, fast bound in the coils of a serpent, writhes in the death agony at her feet.

From below, Gaia, with upraised arms, vainly implores mercy for her sons, whose rashness has brought destruction upon them.

In another relief, (see illustration,) which probably occupied a corresponding place on the opposite side of the flight of steps leading up to the great altar, Zeus, with ægis and thunderbolt, stands in the midst of three fallen enemies, a very god in might. His lower limbs are draped in a mantle, which, passing under the right arm, falls over the left shoulder, leaving the body bare to the hips. The head and arms are wanting, but, much as they must have added to the effect of this noble figure, their loss has not extinguished its power or taken from it its wonderful life.

With equal power the sculptor has represented in another relief the triple-headed and six-armed Hekate and her companion, Ares. The Goddess, fighting with torch and sword, and grandly draped, has "let slip the dogs of war"; while the God, an heroic figure, with helmet and shield, strides over the bodies of fallen giants and writhing serpents, looking a very monarch of the battle-field.

Peculiar animation is given to all the reliefs by the variety of animal forms with which they are filled. Gods and giants, serpents, dogs, the eagle of Zeus, the lion of Kybele, struggle

GIANT.

FROM THE GIGANTOMACHIA.

Drawn by CHARLES METTAIS, from a Heliotype in "Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen."

together for the mastery, rising, falling, retreating, striking, in tumultuous, though never confused array. A splendid example of the contrasts thus afforded is to be seen in the contest of the sacred bird with a serpent and a giant (see illustration), whose nude form is worked out with masterly power. The Giants are of all ages, young, middle-aged, and old, some ugly and some bestial, some of wholly human form, others half man, half serpent, as these beings are described by late poets and mythographers.¹ The names of the Giants represented in the reliefs were inscribed below them, but only those of Chthonophylos and Erysichthoön are now legible. Among the rest we may recognize Alkymenes, or winter personified, first born of all the Giants says Pindar; Porphyreos, the fire-bearer, their king, who fights with Zeus, as Enkelados does with Athena, Minos and Polybotes with Poseidon, Ephialtes with Apollo, Rhoitos with Dionysos, and Klytios with Hekate or Hephaistos. The names of the Gods inscribed above each relief are Kybele, Helios, Eos, and perhaps Selene, Amphitrite, Okeanos, and Trino, Dione, Latona, Themis, Asteria, the mother of Hekate, and the great Gods and Goddesses already mentioned.

Besides the colossal reliefs of the frieze, the excavators at Pergamon discovered a smaller series, with figures of about two thirds the size of life, which decorated the inner side of the parapet about the base of the great altar. They represented scenes of local interest, belonging for the most part to the myth of Telephon, the reputed founder of Pergamon, who was the son of Herakles and Auge, a priestess of Athena. The descriptions given of these works are extremely meagre, and the few outlines of them in the *Fahrbuch* do little towards giving such an idea of them as we have of the Gigantomachia frieze from the illustrations in the same periodical. We are, however, told by Dr. Lübke, in the last edition of his *Geschichte der Plastik*,² that they are as idyllic in treatment as the battle reliefs are epic. Dr. Conze says that they must be more carefully arranged and studied before they can be satisfactorily discussed, and with this statement we must be content to wait for later developments.

To complete our brief record of the recovered objects, we have yet to mention fragments of about thirty marble statues; one large statue of Kybele; small figures of Athena and Hekate; a number of pedestals, which probably supported bronze groups, ranged about the altar and between the columns of the peristyle; and, lastly, a fine colossal head in Parian marble, (see illustration,) dating from about the fourth century B. C., which is not without strong resemblance to that of the Venus of Melos.

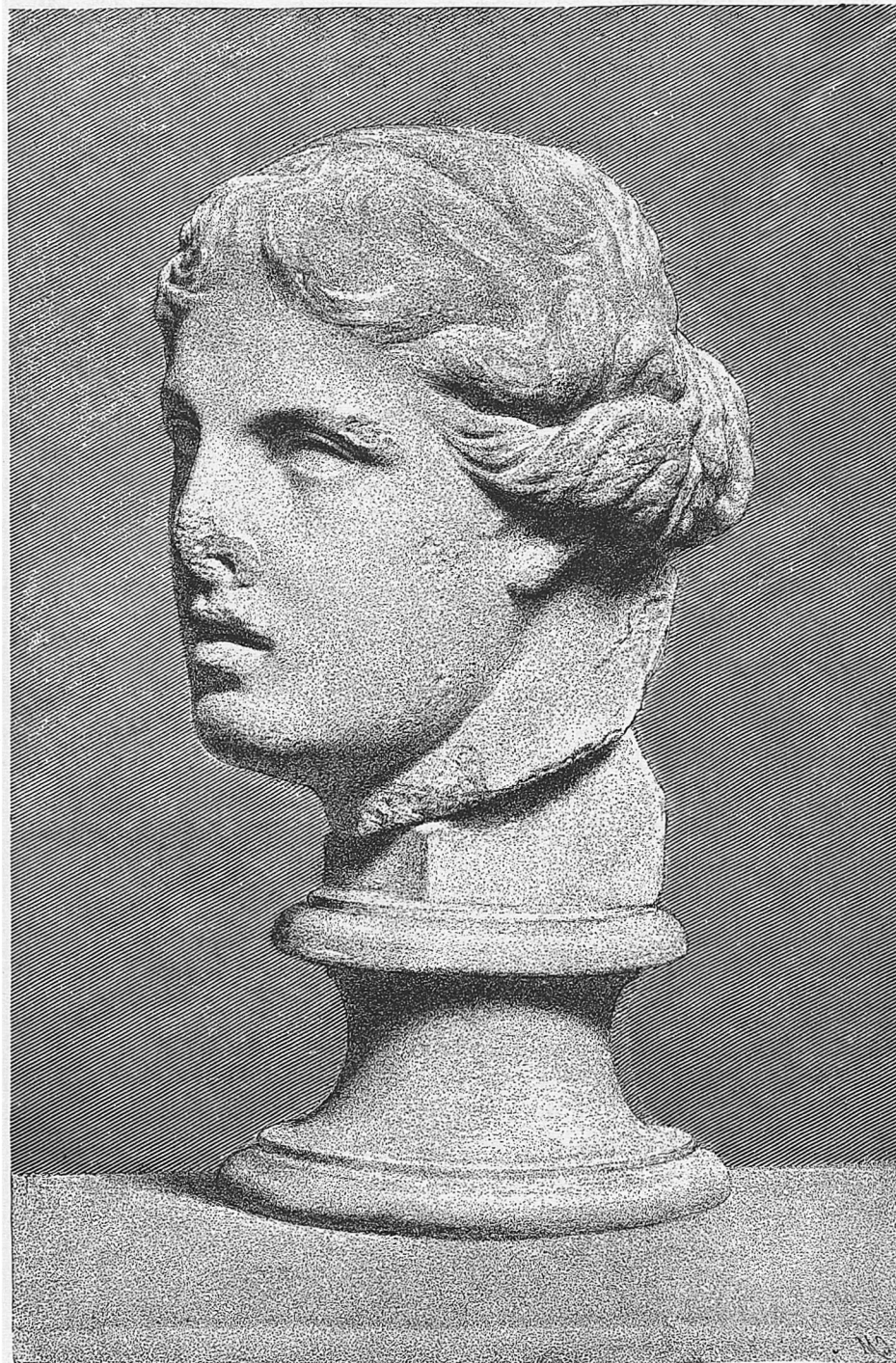
To form a critical estimate of the artistic value of the Pergamon marbles, and more particularly of the great frieze, is not a little difficult, considering the variety of opinions given concerning them by critics of more or less competency. Thus, in an English journal of high standing,³ we read; "The sculpture is in fact very poor, there is no reason to envy the German government its acquisition"; and in a number of the same journal published within a year, "It is not possible to exaggerate the value of the treasures which the exertions of fifteen months have brought into the Museum of Berlin." Dr. Conze and other writers in the *Fahrbuch*, already referred to, give an archæological account rather than an artistic estimate of the recovered marbles, so that, while we gain from them a great deal of general information regarding the excavations and the signification of the subjects represented in the reliefs, our knowledge of their style and technic is but little advanced.

A remarkable example of French criticism, quoted from the *XIX^e Siècle* in the March number of the *Kunst Chronik*, and said to be from the pen of no less a person than the great Victor Hugo, must not be omitted here, as it shows how powerfully these objects, which left the Englishman unmoved, affected the modern Gaul. Like Paulus Emilius when he beheld the Pheidian Zeus, the poet rejoices that he did not die before he had seen these master works. "The fever frost of enthusiasm," he adds, "took possession of me, with its clear, cold tears, as I looked upon them." The same number of the *Chronik* which contains these rhapsodic utterances contains an article quoted from the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, whose more sober and

¹ Preller, *Gr. Myth.*, I. 61.

² 3d ed., Leipzig, 1880, p. 281.

³ *The Academy*, Dec. 6th, 1879, and Nov. 6th, 1880.



COLOSSAL HEAD FOUND AT PERGAMON.

DRAWN BY CHARLES METTAIS.

FROM A HELIOTYPE IN "ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR BILDENDE KUNST."

critical tone entitles it to greater consideration. The figures in the Pergamon frieze, says the writer, which greatly surpasses any other known in size, are half as large again as life, and are worked out with a technical mastery of which we moderns are incapable, and cannot sufficiently wonder at. The sculptor's profound knowledge of anatomy never leads him to make it obtrusive, neither does his stupendous skill induce him to aim at effect as an end, or to accentuate details too strongly. . . . Marble was like wax in the hands of one to whom no difficulty seemed insuperable, no undertaking too high. . . . Unfettered by that fear of spoiling his material which so often cramps the hand of our modern sculptors, he gives living signs of the sureness and sharpness of his stroke in the strongly accentuated draperies, the deep-set eyes, and the open mouths of the combatants. In the remarks which follow, this writer shows that he is no blind partisan, for he does not allow his admiration to hoodwink his judgment. Fearing an over-appreciation of these marbles at a time when boldness, dash, and absolute technical mastery over material are more generally appreciated than those higher qualities which belong to sculpture of the highest period, he speaks a word of caution, and compares the artist to Rubens, who played with difficulties, painted with unrivalled brilliancy and facility of style, and revealed more of the outward beauty than of the inward grace. He also points out the somewhat monotonous repetition of the same type of form in the Giants, their little individuality of expression, and their generally mighty breasts, low foreheads, and bushy hair; and criticises the Gods, as being for the most part revivals of old types.

We shall conclude with an estimate of the Pergamon marbles by Mr. Thomas Davidson, who, having lately seen them at Berlin, has kindly favored us with his impressions, which, as the reader will see, are of no light order.

"The first impression," he says, "which one obtains from the Pergamene reliefs is that of gigantic natural forces in full, mad energy, resisted by something against which all force is vain. We feel somewhat as if we saw the rocks rent by an explosion of gas, or immense weights moved by thin, penetrable steam. The giants are hard, solid, material, resistant; the gods swift, penetrant, and pervasive. They act without being reacted on. If they were suddenly to stay the power which holds the giants in check, the earth would be torn from its solid foundations, and heaven and sea would commingle in wild, howling confusion, a chaos of homeless forces, such as is described in the splendid lines which close the *Prometheus Desmotes* of Æschylos. But the gods are strong; they are like unwearied fire (*ἀκάματον πῦρ*), to which the giants are but as metal to be melted in its impalpable heat. Nowhere else in sculpture is such a complete mastery over material shown as in these groups. Solid marble is as plastic in the hands of the artist as are his giants in the hands of his gods. He robs it of its inertness, and penetrates it with irresistible life. The very hair of the giants is electric; 'each particular hair' seems ready to assume a separate life, and abandon the head it grows on. The effect is overwhelming for a time. And yet the work shows very little striving after effect, being free from mannerism and artifice, excepting that deep grooves are cut in the background to bring out the outlines of the figures more boldly. I remember no other reliefs in which this is done.

"The Pergamene groups are Miltonic; each giant is a splendid Satan, each divinity a son of Omnipotence. Together they express the inner soul of a brave people, who had, godlike, bowed the brute force of the barbarian Gauls and left them but a name. This people took their Promethean secret with them to the tomb, and men can no longer animate images of stone and clay with celestial fire as they did."

These words, which attest the great effect produced by the marbles of the great Pergamon frieze upon one who has studied every ancient school of sculpture critically, leave us no room to doubt their power, and make us ardently long for the day when we shall see casts from them added to the collections of the Art Museums of America.

CHARLES C. PERKINS.